

PRESIDENTS REPORT

October 14, 1976

My report today will be in two segments, a brief look at some of the recent activities of the Association followed by a longer overview in which I discuss the evolution of our organization--where we have been, where we stand now and where we are heading.

Five Contributing Research members joined our ranks during the summer and earlier in the week participated, during our Food and Nutrition Advisory Council meeting, in the appraisal and approval of research projects. Welcomed as CRM's were Coca-Cola, Hershey, General Foods, General Mills and Nabisco. We have been discussing membership with several other major sugar-using companies and anticipate two or three additions by the end of the year. Each CRM has contributed \$10,000 to our general research fund. We are delighted to have this magnificent support from this prestigious group. They will add tremendously to our ability to achieve our objectives. Shortly, Dr. Coursin will be reporting on the results of the FNAC meeting.

The International Sugar Research Foundation met in San Francisco in September. We will be reporting to you on that meeting this morning.

Don Martin will have more to say about this, but I do want to point out that we have been experiencing phenomenal success with our film. We are having difficulty keeping up with demand for it across the country. Ninety-eight per

cent of the commentary we receive is complimentary and laudatory. We have received many requests for permanent copies, primarily from universities and secondary schools. During the summer we had formal press showings in New York and Washington and we plan to show it in Atlanta next week during the Newspaper Food Editors Conference.

Dr. Jean Mayer, formerly with Harvard, took a parting shot at sugar in a bylined piece in the N.Y. Times in June, just before moving to Tufts as president. Mayer and the Times must share the blame for this inaccurate, misleading piece. Mayer, because the story is unsubstantiated opinion written without mention of sources and the Times because it published this shoddy piece without checking it for accuracy or seeking out the other side.

The unfortunate aspect of the piece is that a number of naive writers working for other papers around the country picked up on it in attempting to substantiate their own stories. We're working with the Times in an attempt to develop a rebuttal piece for publication.

The most dramatic ramification of the publication of this story was our exchange with the Reader's Digest, which had planned to run a condensation of it in the November issue. Thanks to friendly sources who alerted us, a progressive approach to research by the Digest and persistence on our part, we were able to persuade them to cancel the story. We did it

in two stages. We failed in our initial conversations, but succeeded when we took our case to the editor-in-chief. Our telegram to him is included in your folders and might be helpful should you be confronted by criticism based on Mayer's opinion.

During the summer we expanded our Nutrition Information Program by hiring free-lance dietitians for Atlanta, New Orleans and Seattle and two for Chicago. At the same time we eliminated Columbus and Albuquerque. We continue to be well received by professional nutritional groups in these areas, who clamour to see our film and devour our literature.

"The Health Robbers," edited by Dr. Stephen Barrett and Gilda Knight, of the American Institute of Nutrition, has been published. We encouraged the publishing of this book, which takes a hard crack at the promoters and health frauds, including Carlton Fredericks and Rodale Press. We came out very well in the limited discussion of sugar. The lack of concern for sugar as a health problem, in itself, is a victory for us. We will do our best to help promote its circulation, primarily through TV exposure. I'll pass around a copy.

The Association's Food Technology & SucroChemistry Committee has been organized, with Dr. Bollenback serving as chairman. Later on I will describe its responsibilities. A list of the Committee members is included in your folders.

Research Members contribute fixed sums for research.

Its Purpose

The Association has developed into the public information and education arm of the sugar industry in matters of sugar and health. As such, it is responsible for the dissemination of substantiated scientific information pertaining to the use of sugar as a food--to its members, user industries, professional groups and the consuming public.

Its Basic Position

The Association's basic position--supported by existing scientific knowledge and the expressed policy position of the U. S. Government through the Food and Drug Administration--holds that sugar is a safe food, which when consumed in moderation plays an important role in a balanced diet.

Its Objectives

Our long-term objective is to establish the scientific facts concerning sugar and health with as many of the 215 million potential U. S. consumers of sugar as is possible through all available means of communication. Its short-term objective is to establish the facts with those specialized professional audiences best prepared to interpret them and in good conscience pass them on to the consuming public. These groups include the scientific community (doctors, dentists

and researchers), dietitians, home economists, teachers, government health officials, user industry groups and the media.

Program Implementation

We operate on the principle that a program of information and education is only as good as the information it dispenses. In essence the organization's activities consist of two basic functions--information gathering and information distribution, with the former feeding and sustaining the latter.

Why this Program

For many years the sugar industry lived comfortably in the knowledge that its products had universal acceptance, with minor exceptions. At the same time sugar's imparting sweetness, provision of energy and purity were highly valued.

But with the rise of the consumer movement in the late 1960's, consumers, taking nothing on faith, began demanding detailed evidence to support product claims. Doubts arose and were exploited, many directed at our food supply. Though there is no perfect food, some lay critics demanded that each be so. Many, including sugar, were put on the defensive.

The enemies of sugar have charged it with contributing to every disease and physical ailment known to man, from heart disease to sweating palms. A recent survey

indicated that as an aftermath of the 1974-75 price runup, some housewives have become more concerned about the issue of sugar and health.

We have had to answer back to establish the facts or run the risk of being legislated out of existence.

Sugar and the Consumer Movement

Invariably, opportunists are quick to take advantage of social change. The consumer movement has provided great impetus to the promoters of health foods, fad diets and quack remedies, many of whom are adept at exploiting the media to serve their purposes.

The basics of sound personal nutrition are relatively simple but the individual is frequently confused by the complexities of the body's use of food (metabolism). The promoter thrives in this atmosphere and will deliberately stimulate this confusion to cover his distortion of the facts.

Sugar, for a number of reasons, became a target of the promoters. One reason, perhaps, is the puritanical hangover in some of us that regards anything that gives pleasure as somehow sinful and fattening. More probably, sugar became a handy target because of its high visibility as a universally-used food, overindulgence on the part of some consumers, its long association with tooth decay and the concentrated efforts of the dairy industry to draw attention from the contributions of cholesterol to heart disease. The appellation, "Sugar Baron," still brings to the consumer oriented the

thought of huge profits, now known as "ripoffs."

Unfortunately, whatever the reasons, the persuasive purveyors of nutritional rubbish have misled a great many well-meaning advocates and media commentators, who in turn have misled the consuming public. As a result, sugar, once accepted almost without question, has become a highly controversial food.

Sugar Controversy

In the media, the controversy over sugar has been inspired largely by laymen, using as authorities some in the medical community who have theories that do not coincide with, or at least oversimplify, those of the majority of qualified experts and the body of scientific knowledge relating to sugar and health. Some critics represent opposing commercial interests. The Association has not found concentrated opposition to sugar in responsible medical circles, but it has detected concern among many individual doctors and dentists unfamiliar with the facts. This, unfortunately, seems to influence the thinking and actions of national and local politicians.

The Scientific Facts

The debate over sugar centers largely on two false charges: 1) Americans are consuming ever-increasing amounts of sugar; and 2) This excessive consumption is contributing directly to the incidence of a multiplicity of maladies, including death-dealing diseases. The charges have lent credence

to a number of "myths," such as "Sugar makes you fat"; "Sugar provides empty calories"; "Sugar is addictive."

Although unsubstantiated, these allegations and myths have gained a considerable degree of public acceptance, because neither our scientific community nor our food industries have in the past communicated effectively with the public. The initiative has been allowed to go to the enemy--the nutrition theorists in show business, the hucksters of diet books, the sellers of health foods and their ilk.

They would deny the tentative conclusions of the government's GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) Review Committee--as did Dr. Mayer in his recent N.Y. Times piece, in failing to mention the GRAS report--that declared sugar to be safe at current consumption levels.

In regard to consumption, as you all know, U. S. per-capita disappearance of sugar has been unchanged at about 100 lbs. for over 50 years, with the exception of the World War II years, and in 1975 when it dropped to about 90 lbs. owing to a world-wide shortage that pushed its price to abnormal levels. We figure that actual consumption runs about 20 per cent less, because USDA figures are based on deliveries and do not reflect spillage, spoilage and waste.

Sugar, as a carbohydrate, contributes the same number of calories per unit weight as protein and half that of fat. Thus sugar contributes no more to obesity than any other food and less than many fat-laden products. Weight

control is simply a matter of balancing food intake with energy expenditure.

However, sugar, as a food, in certain forms and when consumed with abnormal frequency does contribute to dental caries.

In confronting our critics we try never to lose sight of the fact that no confirmed scientific evidence links sugar to the death-dealing diseases. This crucial point is the life blood of the Association.

Gathering the Facts

As I mentioned earlier, before we can disseminate the facts through our information program, we have to find them. In addition to collecting readily available existing data, the Association must prompt those capable of providing additional information and stimulate research that will uncover new material. We look to the scientific community to gather, interpret, organize and publish the facts concerning sugar and health and rely on the help and guidance of the Food and Nutrition Advisory Council and other established sources of scientific information.

The Association seeks out and supports scientific research projects that may add to the existing body of knowledge relating to sugar and health, which can ultimately serve to increase public understanding.

The Association also supports a modest program of nutrition education. In doing so, it not only increases public

awareness of the importance of good nutrition but provides a base from which to correct the misapprehensions surrounding sugar.

To support sound nutrition requires a commitment to fight the forces of nutrition misinformation and quackery. This the Association has done in its public statements and with its support of institutions fighting this battle.

Organization

The day-to-day work of the Sugar Association is primarily that of external relations. The Association has a number of publics, or target audiences, with which it regularly communicates--the scientific community, including doctors and dentists; professional nutritionists, including food technologists, dietitians and home economists; government officials, primarily those working with sugar-concerned organizations, such as the Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Trade Commission; user groups, such as The Cereal Institute, National Soft Drink Association and the National Confectioners Association; and the media. The final audience, of course, whether it takes its sugar directly or through sugar-containing products, is the consuming public.

For ready understanding, it is easiest to think of the Association's daily activities as being divided between public relations and scientific functions.